

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

It was probably about this time that a last attempt from the religious portion of the city was made to hinder Catherine's work, and it came from two men in Siena who were, in Francesco Malavolti's words, "religious of very great worth according to the world." One, Fra Gabriele da Volterra, a Franciscan and then minister of the province, a "Master in Sacred Theology," with a great reputation for learning and preaching, was a sort of petty Brother Elias, who lived sumptuously in the convent of San Francesco like a great prelate. The other was a friar of the order of Augustinian hermits, Fra Giovanni Tantucci (usually known as Giovanni Terzo, to distinguish him from two other "Brother Johns" who had preceded him in his convent), also a ^{<f>} Master in Sacred Theology," who had been to England, where he had taken his doctor's degree at the University of Cambridge. These two murmured against Catherine, in orthodox pharisaical fashion, saying that she was an ignorant woman, seducing simple persons with false expositions of holy Scripture, and leading them to hell with herself. They resolved to make her recognize her errors, and came one day to visit her, with two companions, intending to silence her by difficult theological questions. A number of men and women were with her when they arrived ; Fra Tommaso della Fonte, Fra Matteo Tolomei, a certain Niccolo di Mino, Tommaso di Guelfaccio, Neri di Landoccio, Gabriele Piccolomini, Alessa, Lisa, Cecca, and others, including Francesco Malavolti, who tells the tale of what happened.

" While we were thus listening to the saintly and wonderful words and doctrine of that holy virgin, she suddenly broke off in her speech, and, becoming all enkindled and with countenance all glowing, she raised her eyes to heaven, and said : * Blessed be Thou, sweet and eternal Bridegroom, who dost find so many new ways and paths by which to draw or lead souls to Thyself.' And she said many other words, which I do not remember exactly, and would not be able to repeat in the form in which they were uttered by her. But we were all attention, considering what she did, for her motions and all her words were full of mystery nor without particular cause ; so we were expecting